

# ***IN THE LOOP***, Volume 1, Issue 4

## ***Legislative Email Update***

### **EMERALD ASH BORER SITES OPENED, PATTERSON URGES CONGRESS FOR ASSISTANCE**

Patterson's Senate Resolution 49, which urges Congress to provide assistance to fight the insect, has passed the Senate Natural Resource and Environmental Affairs Committee and awaits consideration on the Senate floor. Patterson and Congressman McCotter have been working together in urging Congress and the USDA to provide assistance to deal with the Emerald Ash Borer infestation.

State and local officials announced the opening of four free disposal sites in southeast Michigan for dead and dying ash trees impacted by the Emerald Ash Borer. The Emerald Ash Borer, an exotic insect from Asia, was detected in Michigan in the summer of 2002 and is responsible for killing or damaging millions of ash trees in Southeast Michigan. To control and prevent its further spread, the Michigan Department of Agriculture issued a quarantine on all ash trees and ash wood products, including firewood, in Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Washtenaw and Wayne counties. Under the quarantine, it is illegal to move ash trees, branches, lumber, firewood and wood chips larger than one inch in diameter outside the six counties. Ash tree disposal sites are located in Macomb, Plymouth, Pontiac and Westland. For more information on the destructive Asian insect, visit [www.michigan.gov/mda](http://www.michigan.gov/mda) and use keyword "ash borer."

### **PATTERSON NAMED TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL TASK FORCE**

Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema (R-Wyoming) named Bruce Patterson to the Environmental Task Force of the Council of State Governments. Patterson takes his role in protecting Michigan's natural resources very seriously. As Vice-Chair of the Natural Resource and Environmental Affairs Committee and now a member of the nationally recognized Environmental Task Force, he pledges to continue his efforts to preserve and protect the outdoor heritage of our great state for future generations.

The Environmental Task Force provides a forum for state leaders to address environmental challenges. The task force's activities focus on tracking national conditions and emerging trends, identifying solutions, and transforming these solutions into viable policy positions and response projects. The environmental task force encourages multi-state problem-solving and sharing of best practices. It facilitates networking among state officials and between the public and private sectors.

Task force priorities include: water quality and supply allocation, environmental management systems, renewable energy, and the role information plays in promoting sound public policy decision-making. It also focuses on how states can best deliver environmental services and an improved environment through policies, programs, and partnerships.

### **SARS UPDATE ISSUED BY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH**

The Michigan Department of Community Health issued an update on Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) recently. Michigan has two suspect SARS cases reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. SARS symptoms include a fever of over 100.5°F or higher and respiratory difficulties including cough, shortness of breath or other difficulty breathing, developing on or after February 1, 2003, in persons who have recently traveled to countries in Asia, or who have had close contact with ill persons who had recently traveled to those countries. The two Michigan cases have both occurred in Kent County residents. Neither of the individuals are hospitalized and both are in good condition. The Department of Community Health is also monitoring the health status of a New Hampshire resident who is hospitalized in Michigan and is considered to be a suspect SARS case. The department is working closely with physicians, local health departments and laboratories across Michigan to identify potential SARS cases.

### **PATTERSON OBSERVES MICHIGAN TAX FREEDOM DAY (APRIL 17, 2003)**

As the author of the last tax cut signed into law by former Governor John Engler and an advocate for less taxation, Patterson has continually taken a stance against unnecessary and burdensome taxes placed on our Michigan taxpayers. He believes government must operate in an efficient fashion, especially in these difficult economic times.

Tax Freedom Day represents when taxpayers are no longer working to pay taxes. In the year 2000 Michigan celebrated Tax Freedom Day on April 27, 2000. This year Michigan celebrates Tax Freedom Day 10 days earlier and two days before the nation. Senator Patterson is pleased to know that Michigan taxpayers are paying fewer taxes than three years ago and that we are ahead of the nation. However, we must continue to lower the number of days Michigan taxpayers are a slave to government. Tax Freedom Day is an easy way for Michigan taxpayers to gage their overall taxation, a task that can be quite daunting due to 'hidden' taxes and fees that are often buried in the cost of living. This day is a stark reminder of our actual take home pay, as well as the burdensome taxes put on Michigan families.

Tax Freedom Day illustrates the share of the nation's income that goes to pay federal, state, and local taxes. It assumes that income is earned evenly throughout the year and that individuals initially devote all of their earnings to paying their taxes. The day that Michigan taxpayers are free to spend their income on other goods and services is Tax Freedom Day. The nation will celebrate Tax Freedom Day on April 19, 2003

### **DNR UNVEILS PARK CLEAN UP PROGRAM**

Day users at Michigan state parks, recreation areas and linear trails will be asked to carry out everything they carry in under a new program announced this week. The Carry In, Carry Out Trash Free Parks program asks day users at more than 35 facilities to

remove their own refuse. The goals of the program are to improve the overall appearance and safety of the parks through the removal of unsightly, pest-attracting refuse containers, as well as to promote an outdoor ethic embracing the idea that park users are active partners in the stewardship of our natural resources. Officials hope the program will discourage wasteful picnic practices and encourage reusing and recycling and ensure more productive use of park staff time by limiting the time spent on trash removal. Visitors are encouraged to use reusable food containers, napkins and tablecloths; avoid single serving or individually wrapped products and recycle such items as glass, Styrofoam and plastics. For more information contact the Department of Natural Resources at (517) 373-0399.

#### **PATTERSON MAKES HISTORY WITH SIGNING OF SB 160**

Here is a link to more photos of Senator Patterson and Governor Granholm as she signs her first bill. Photos also include guests present for the signing.

<http://www.michigan.gov/gov/0,1607,7-168-22347-65633--,00.html>

#### **CONCERNED ABOUT A PIECE OF LEGISLATION OR AN ISSUE? WRITE YOUR PAPER!**

If you are interested in sharing your views on any issues, pieces of legislation or a personal topic of interest with your community, please contact Senator Patterson's office at [senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov) for more information.

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If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or one of my staff members.

Thank you for your continued interest in the legislative activities of the Michigan Senate. Again, should you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,

Bruce Patterson  
State Senator - 7th District

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